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PRESS RELEASE

**TWO PLEAD GUILTY TO BANK FRAUD AND IDENTITY THEFT:
ADMIT TO PLACING SKIMMING DEVICES IN RITE AIDS TO STEAL
DEBIT CARD INFORMATION**

David C. Weiss, Acting United States Attorney for the District of Delaware, announced that two federal defendants, Artur Grigoryan and Artur Harutyunyan, both 26 years old, pleaded guilty to bank fraud and identity theft charges in federal court. Harutyunyan pleaded guilty today to charges of bank fraud which were transferred to the District of Delaware from the Eastern District of Pennsylvania for purposes of the plea. Grigoryan is scheduled to plead guilty tomorrow to charges of bank fraud and identity theft also transferred from the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Both defendants already pleaded guilty in September and October 2008 to similar charges of bank fraud and identity theft relating to the same scheme in the District of Delaware.

Harutyunyan admitted to participating in a scheme to defraud banks by using "skimmers" — portable electronic storage devices that can extract customer account information from the magnetic strips on the backs of debit cards. In January 2007, Grigoryan and Harutyunyan went to Rite Aid stores in Wayne, Pennsylvania and North Wilmington, Delaware. While Harutyunyan distracted the store clerks, Grigoryan placed skimming devices inside the debit/credit card pad attached to the cash registers.

The skimming devices captured the debit card numbers and personal identification numbers (PINS) of Rite Aid customers who used their bank cards between January 2007 and April 2007. Grigoryan, with Harutyunyan's help, downloaded the customers' information, and used the data to manufacture counterfeit debit cards. Grigoryan, Harutyunyan, and other co-conspirators then used the counterfeit debit cards to make fraudulent cash withdrawals from ATMs primarily located inside Wawa stores in Pennsylvania and Delaware. The unauthorized cash withdrawals total over \$570,000.

The victims of this scheme had accounts at Citizens Bank, PNC Bank, WSFS Bank and Commerce Bank, Chestnut Run Federal Credit Union, Dexsta Federal Credit Union, DPL Federal Credit Union and Great Lakes Credit Union, and Wachovia Bank.

Grigoryan and Harutyunyan each face up to thirty years in prison for the bank fraud conviction, and an additional mandatory two years of imprisonment on the aggravated identity theft charges.

Acting United States Attorney, David C. Weiss, stated, “The defendants stole hundreds of thousands of dollars through a carefully planned scheme. They now will be held to account for this crime which affected citizens in Delaware and Pennsylvania, as well as our financial institutions.”

For further information, please contact Assistant United States Attorney Ilana Eisenstein or Acting United States Attorney David C. Weiss.

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